

ALC UPDATE

It is pleasing to be able to report, after a very tough dry season, both our properties Gundaroo and Tondara have had useful rain through this wet season. Our rain started reasonably late, with our first falls coming in January. After an average wet season last year, we had early frost followed by light spoiling rain which made the feed turn black, with very little energy or protein value. The consequence of this, is all our cattle were losing body condition through the dry. The rain we have received at Gundaroo hasn't been big in totals but the distribution has been almost perfect with no runoff. The useful grass rain has provided an adequate body of grass to get us through the next dry season.

Tondara on the other hand has been under a couple of extreme weather events. The first being Cyclone Penny, which dumped 520mm in 14 hours. Then a tropical low sat over the area and dumped 450mm in one event. The total rain over this four-month period was 1,400mm which is over double our annual average rainfall for the area. Although not ideal the way the rain fell, it has made for an excellent season and the pasture is in very strong condition going into the dry. Those same extreme weather events unfortunately created quite a bit of havoc in the North West of our state, with severe flooding and cattle losses due to exposure to cold rain in some areas. This has been a kick in the guts for those producers, having already been in severe drought, but as before, they are rebuilding herd numbers, fences and roads on their properties.



On our own properties, due to the very ordinary pre-season and lack of nutrition and energy in our grass, our females worked particularly hard this year to reconceive. At Gundaroo in the ALC herd, we took the opportunity of the tough conditions, to really give the breeders a squeeze for reproduction and adaptation, therefore fed supplement to wet 2-year-old calving females only. All other breeders received no supplement. Wet cows were mated for 100 days (October to mid-January) and maiden heifers 60 days (October/November). Our conception rates this year are back on previous years (where we had better seasons) by around 10%, coming in at 77% this year. We are extremely happy with this result considering the mating was done before decent rain, with all females lactating and losing body condition during this time. The pregnant females that remain in our herd after this year therefore, are truly fertile and adapted animals. Next year, our plan is to have a 90-day mate in October, November and December on wet cows and 60-day mate on maiden heifers from October to November. Having this tight and early breeding season has allowed us to complete all our weaning and pregnancy testing by the end of April. This year, we should have all our open female's fat and sold before the end of June, not to waste any available feed on non-productive animals.

Weaning and pregnancy testing this time of year is always enjoyable as it wraps up the completion of our years' work. The rebreed, achieved through comprehensive management and genetic selection, is what we are striving for. ***Our number one breeding objective is, after all, fertility. Therefore, to have a herd of females that rebreed rapidly, regardless of season, while lactating, with no expensive supplements.*** We're extremely pleased with our calf crop this year, both in genotype and phenotype. You can really see the emphasis we've put on our sire selection within the breeding program. The favourable temperament and do ability are really evident in this year's calves along with an extremely strong data set to back up the claims. The resilience and fertility that allowed their mothers to rebreed this year, certainly makes the future look bright.

As a result of not having staff at Gundaroo, our children have become an integral part of the family business and Louise and I are extremely proud of how very capable they all have become. Our children are aged 16, 14 and 12 and over the past six months alone, the boys have become particularly competent with branding and dehorning calves, trimming horses, welding, building new fence and pregnancy testing breeders and our daughter is very accurate at recording raw data on the TSI. Very gratifying to see.



Over this next month, we will be busy preparing our bulls for **this year's bull sale, held on Tuesday 9th July at Gundaroo.** In the coming weeks, we will finish analysing all our EBV data, categorise the bull's, morphology test sale bulls then select future sires to retain in the herd. A busy but exciting time.

As usual, the bulls will be sold under the Helmsman bidding system and the Bull Sale Catalogue will include four generations of female fertility data, age of puberty and scrotal measurement, EBV's for growth, scrotal size and days to calving, along with Jap Ox and Live Ex \$ Index's. For all details regarding the Bull Sale, please go to our web site www.alcrahmans.com.au The catalogue will be available online the week before the sale. If you do not have internet access please feel free to contact Louise or Alf for more information, to discuss which bulls will best suit your requirements or a catalogue. Our door is always open.

ALC ranks extremely high in the Brahman Breed for fertility trait EBV's such as DTC and SS along with Jap Ox \$ index and Live Ex \$ index, so this is a great opportunity to add genetics to your herd that will have an impact on profitability for your business into the future. If semen is what you'd prefer for this year's mating, much of the information you need can be found on our web site www.alcrahmans.com.au

Regards,

Alf





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Permanence, perseverance and persistence in spite of all obstacles, discouragements, and impossibilities: It is this, that in all things distinguishes the strong soul from the weak. – Thomas Carlyle

ALC BULL SALE 9TH JULY 2019



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